

**HISTORICAL SKETCH**

**...THE ...**

**SHELDALL  
SCHOOL**

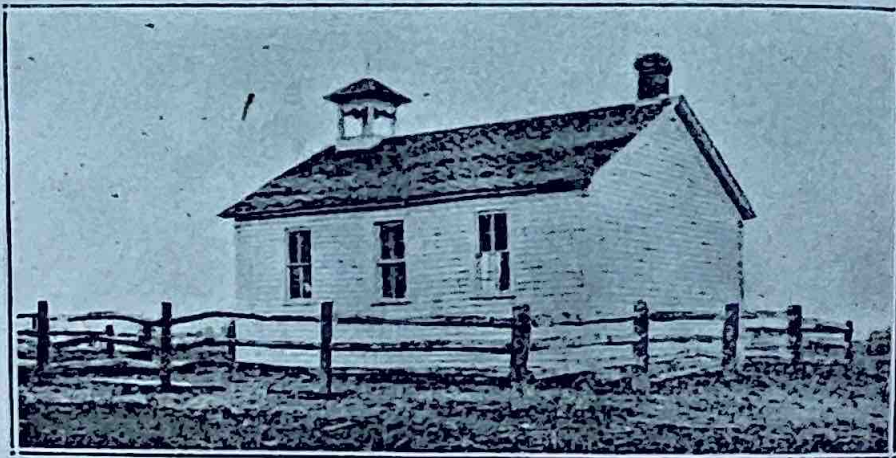


**PRICE 25 CENTS**



# SHELDALL SCHOOL

DISTRICT No. 1, SCOTT TOWNSHIP  
HAMILTON COUNTY, IOWA



THE SHELDALL SCHOOL  
(As It Appears Today)

The Sheldall School took its name from Lars Sheldall, the resident owner of the site where it was established. The building was erected by the Township in 1860, Lars Henryson being employed as carpenter. Most of the material used in its construction consisted of native timber brought from the nearby Skunk river woods. The sills and joists were hewn from oak logs, and the frame-work, also of oak, having been fashioned in the required dimensions at Dan McCarthy's saw-mill near Story City.

The Sheldall School of Scott Township was the first public institution of learning in southern Hamilton County, and drew pupils from adjacent townships as, also, from the northern part of Story County.

The school house being the only public building in the vicinity was frequently used for church purposes or other meetings of a public character. Rev.



Nils Amlund, the resident, pioneer pastor of this section, often conducted divine services here. There were not a few baptisms; also marriages and funerals. Other ministers besides Amlund occasionally preached here. These were Rev. Rasmussen, Rev. O. Sheldall, Rev. Eisteinson and the itinerant preachers Elling Eielson, Endre Johanneson, N. P. Ling and M. A. Sommer. With the exception of the latter two, who were Danes, the others had come to this country from Norway.

Toward the latter part of the year 1885 the Sheldall School house was no longer used for school purposes, a new school house having been built on the proper township site three-quarters of a mile further east.

The old building was bought by the members of The Riverside Cornet Band and converted into a practice room. In the year 1886 it was moved three-quarters of a mile northwest and placed on the west side of the main road, on the land of Lars Henryson. It stood in this picturesque place in the outskirts of the Skunk river woods for about four years. At this time the band (the original organization) disbanded, and the building was sold and moved to the town of Randall. Here it was used as a dwelling by several persons in turn until the year 1915, when the former Riverside

band members raised funds sufficient to have it moved back to its original site, its present location. Mrs. Carrie Henryson, widow of Osmund Henryson (Ostebø), the then owner, donated the site. When T. L. Henderson and P. G. Tjernagel completed the replacement of the foundation under the old building, Oct. 4, 1916, they placed a record of the school in the northeast corner-stone.

The venerable old building is now serving as a storehouse for the preservation of local relics, pictures and various mementos reminiscent of an early day. It is hoped that many will co-operate and help make the collection as full and interesting as possible.

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### Patrons of the Sheldall School

(The ancestral place-names of many of the patrons who came from the old country and by which they and their children were often distinguished, have been included. With some of them the place-name was adopted as the written name.)

Lars Sheldall; Lars Henryson (Østebø); Haaver Thompson; Enoch Thompson; Isaac Biggs; Lars Olson (Bøe); Tjeran Charlson (Halsnes); Sivert Kuntson (Meltvedt); Anders Christenson (Tjerna-



gel); Endre Christenson (Tjernagel); A. O. Hall; John Larson (Mathre); Jone Charlson (Hagen); Mr. Reagan; Edel Braland; Christen Knutson (Aabe); Aaen Owenson (Sokn); Mr. Walters; Anbjørn Anderson (Tunge); William Williams (Tunge); Ole Ritland; Francis Wier; John Pearson (Børcha); Ole Bergeson; M. Olmstead; Knut Egland; Johannes Johnson (Storesund); Thore Olson; Ole Andrias Tjernagel; Peder Larson Tjernagel, "Store Per"; Barney Charlson (Hagen); Kjetil Knutson (Garvig); Osmund Weltha (Helgeland); Jacob Charlson (Grove); Aaen Braland; Rasmus Olson (Lund); Gjert Anfinson (Ness); Mr. Johnson (Glosemot); Torbjørn Larson (Tungesvig); Mr. Ludvig (Sorn); Mr. Wilson; Mr. Olverson; Lars Ponsnes; Lars Henderson (Øiro); Andreas Knutson (Meltvedt); Elling Aga; Ole Braland; Martin Morrison; Henry Henderson (Østebø); Jøren Boyd; Andrew Larson (Mathre); Christian P. Christianson; Rasmus Sheldall; Arendt Anfinson (Ness); Andrew Berry (Kalevaag); Mr. Anderson; Peter Peterson (Hetland); William Maakestad; Olai Shaw; Christian Sandnes; Abraham Knutson (Lier); Thore Braland; Rasmus Rasmussen (Vaula); Endre Johnson (Hovland); Anfin Anfinson (Ness); Theodore Hanson; Johannes Johnson (Hetland); Mr. Montgomery.

The great majority of the pioneer patrons were

Norwegian immigrants who had come across the sea in sailships and, later, over the plains from Illinois in prairie schooners. Some came here as early as 1855. There were also a few Danes, and a sprinkling of English speaking families who had emigrated from the eastern states. By settling here they were fortunate to come upon the best of locations, for in a Government soil survey Scott Township is designated as the best six miles square of agricultural territory in the United States. This township forms the very heart of a great land area famous for the virgin excellency of its soil.

All these comers were inured to hardships and plain living. They took hold energetically to establish themselves, but did not always find it easy to pay the school tax, nor to supply the children with the necessary books and clothing. But where there is a will there is a way, and by practicing thrift and economy sufficient was saved to enable them to rig out the children comfortably, and with enough in the dinner pail to satisfy healthy appetites. Kentucky-jean coats and pants, hickory shirts and heavy top boots for the boys were much in vogue. Calico dresses for girls had not gone out of fashion; and many pretty faces peeped out from beneath sun-bonnets those days. The suits and dresses were made to order at home by hand. Woolen stockings



and mittens were knit by mother. The dinner basket bulged with layers of bread bountifully interspersed with butter and molasses. Sometimes there would be egg, meat or cheese sandwiches, the latter being, then as now, easily recognized through its time-honored characteristic. Pie and cake belonged mostly to the Sunday dinner menu, but cookies, doughnuts and kringla were not uncommon. Usually the pupils were required to eat their dinners quietly while in the school room, but not infrequently there would be a rush-and-grab for a slice of bread, then a huge mouthful taken enough to choke a dog, and out they would charge with bat or ball in one hand and a fistful of crumpled bread in the other, entirely too busy to eat. Though they would be forgetful at times, the children had been taught by their parents never to waste any food, hence when it happened that a teacher threw the remnants of his dinner into the fire the pupils looked on with horror.

Often, during protracted spells of bad winter-weather, the fathers would have the added task of taking the children to and from school, besides the unusual burden of extra chores that such weather gave. Frost-bitten ears and noses were not uncommon. Overshoes were not much used, hence many little toes were stiffened with cold, yet without serious injury as far as I know.

There were fewer changes of text-books in those days as compared with the present, which was fortunate for the parents who could ill afford to buy very many new books. The children were required to handle the books carefully and not to gnaw off the covers, finger the leaves carelessly, or use them for playthings.

As most of the patrons were new-comers and not familiar with English, especially in a written form, the children could not receive much aid from them during home study, but would oftener help the parents themselves when any reading or writing was required. Usually the children did all their studying during school hours and could thus help their parents with the work in the morning and evening, before and after school.

Though having had fairly good schooling in the common branches from the mother country, all of these comers were anxious to acquire the language, and to become imbued with the right American spirit so as to fulfill loyally the requirements of their adopted country, both as to school and the laws in general. Hence even some of the patrons left their wives and little babies at home the better part of the day, during winter, to attend school. There was no friction between the nationalities. The



few English speaking residents did not hold themselves superior, but were kind and helpful.

It was easier for the teachers to get boarding places then than now. The rooms in the homes were rather few and small, but there was an abundance of hospitality and good cheer. The parents and the teacher were usually on most amicable terms and collaborated to make the school a worthy supplement of the home. Therefore the school often drew visitors, speeches being held by patrons and interest aroused so that debating societies were organized, school exhibitions held and spelling matches encouraged.

Though there were difficulties to overcome then as now, the new country, with its promise for the future, gave zest to the active and ambitious; and children and all were imbued with buoyant hopes for the days to come, which enabled them the better to enjoy to the full the little pleasures and advantages within reach. Thus, when the whole family turned out to the school exhibitions the air was so saturated with happy joyousness that it was just a little difficult to breathe, especially just before the curtain went up. And I doubt if the Roman gladiators ever held their honors in happier esteem than did the hero of the spelling match. It was a worthwhile exercise, for it brought the qualities of con-

centration and accuracy into play, encouraged studiousness and served as a means for social getting-together. The oratorical outbursts at the debates were both lofty and ludicrous, all according to the occasion or degree of ability; however, there was, all in all, much common sense expressed, even considerable display of skill in discussion. The patrons, teachers and pupils all took part.

Though denied many of the privileges of present day life, the people seemed to be pretty well satisfied with what they had; their lives were full and they did not repine because of this or that lack or need; in short, they had a happy knack of making the best of things.

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#### The Sheldall School Teachers and the Number of Terms Each Taught

Elijah Griffith: Spring terms, 1859-1860. These two terms of school were held in the homes of Mr. Biggs and Mr. Woodworth, respectively, pending the erection of school house.

Capt. William A. Wier: Winter term 1860-61. Mr. Wier was the first teacher in the new school house.

O. A. Hall: Winter term 1861-62. Summer term



1862 was begun by Hall, but because of his enlistment in the army it was finished by John Deffenbecker.

John Deffenbecker: Winter term 1862-63.

Martha Ballard: Spring term 1863. (Married Mr. H. F. Ferguson.)

Martha Martin: Fall term 1863.

Sarah Ballard: Winter term 1863-64. (Married H. H. Boyes.)

Susan J. Springer: Winter term 1864-65. Spring term 1865. Winter term 1865-66. Spring term 1866

G. W. Castle: Winter term 1866-67. Winter term 1868-69. Mr. Castle taught the winter term 1867-68 in the Owenson school just established.

Ruth Ballard: Spring term 1867.

Henry L. Henderson: Winter term 1867-68. Summer term 1868. (Sheldall School pupil.)

Mary A. Dickoph: Spring term 1869. (Married Mr. Wirth.)

George J. Pierson: Winter term 1869-70.

Regina Nelson: Spring term 1870. Fall term 1871. Winter term 1871-72.

Agnes Briggs: Winter term 1870-71.

George F. Tucker: Fall term 1872. Winter term 1872-73.

Anna E. Hunter: Spring term 1873. Winter term 1873-74.

Lewis F. Anderson: Spring term 1874. Winter term 1874-75. Spring term 1875. Winter term 1875-76.

Alice Hartman: Spring term 1876. Winter term 1876-77. (Married Mr. Babbitt.)

Christ Thoreson: Spring term 1877.

O. M. Wiester: Winter term 1877-78. Spring term 1878. Winter term 1878-79. Spring term 1879.

B. F. Maricle: Winter term 1879-80.

R. G. Pierce: Spring term 1880.

W. H. Wier: Winter term 1880-81. (Son of the first teacher, W. A. Wier.)

O. B. Peterson: Spring term 1881.

Maggie Smith: Winter term 1881-82.

Mary B. Christianson: Spring term 1882. (Married W. H. Wier.) Sheldall School pupil.

Nellie Richardson: Winter term 1882-83. Winter term 1883-84. Spring term 1884. Winter term 1884-85. (Married Mr. Bell.)

Lewis J. Tjernagel: Spring term 1883. (Sheldall School pupil.)

O. O. Burton: Spring term 1885.

The Sheldall School served its purpose for twenty-six years. There were held fifty-two terms of school. The number of teachers was thirty; and the pupils numbered two hundred forty-one.

Next to the last named teacher in the list, Lewis



J. Tjernagel, has succeeded in the rather difficult undertaking of collecting pictures of them all. These have been enlarged and now adorn the walls of the old school house, forming a rare and highly interesting memorial of the past. Pictures of the great majority of the patrons have also been secured and now dot the historic walls of the school they helped establish in the long ago. It would be well if the pupils, also, were thus represented.

Nearly all the teachers were sons or daughters of pioneers, of whom some were patrons, or settlers in other parts of this territory not far removed. Scarcely any of the teachers were highly educated, but all of them had experienced more or less of practical life, had a fair share of common sense and were able to keep order and to impart instruction in the common branches; also to encourage the children in a wholesome way of living.

### The Sheldall School Pupils

1859-1864: Rasmus, Anna, Malinda and Erick Sheldall; Henry, Oscar, Anna, Betsy and Tom Henderson (Østebø); Ole, Anna, Sam, Oliver and Malinda Larson (Mathre); Lewis, Catherine and Taurina Charlson (Halsnes); Ole, Tom, Endre, An-

drias and Aasa Braland; George H. Thompson; Valencia and Florence Biggs; Sarah Griffith; Bertha and Helen Christenson (Tjernagel); Olof, Caroline and Malinda Olson (Bøe); Charles, Emily, Albert and Olof Knutson (Meltvedt); Dave and Tom Reagan; Charley and Betsy Charlson (Hagen); Andrew, Carrie and Henry Williams (Tunge); Jøren Boyd; Emma, Amy and Louise Walters; Ole and Osmund Ritland; Mary Owenson (Sokn); Christen and Lars Christenson (Tjernagel); Andrew, Martha and Ida Anderson (Tunge); Knut, John and Betsy Knutson (Aabe); Nels Peterson (Auckland); Peter and Bertel Pearson (Børcha); Will and R. L. Montgomery.

In the following the names of new pupils enrolled each year are given in successive order:

1865: Syvert Syvertson; Andrew Knutson (Meltvedt); Martha Sheldall; Anna Skimmeland; Thomas and Christian Knutson (Aabe); Mary and Julia Olson; Betsy Pearson (Børcha); Ada, Clara and Alba Hall; Sampson Wier.

1866: Anna Knutson (Aabe); Elsie and Anna Bergeson; Sam Anderson; Helen, Sarah and Knut Knutson (Garvig); Erick Egland; Edwin Owenson (Sokn).. Anfin and Julia Anfinson (Ness).

1867: William, Charley and George Olmstead; Frank Wier; Ole and Isabelle Johnson (Glosemot); Isabelle Knutson (Garvig); Ole Olson (Lund); Ce-



celia Scott; Oliver, George and Thomas Boyd; Jake Eglund; Andrew Larson (Mathre); John Johnson (Storesund).

1868: Lewis J. Tjernagel; Hannah Thompson; Lizzie Olson (Bøe); Jacob Weltha; Charlie and Lewis Johnson (Glosemot); Ono Olverson; Martha Knutson (Meltvedt); Lena Ludvig (Sorn).

1869: Martin L. Henderson (Østebø); Peter G. Tjernagel; John Larson (Mathre); Swen Larson (Slettavig); Mary and Anna Thompson; John Carston; Annie Charlson (Grove); John Loss; Sarah Ludvig (Sorn).

1870: Charlie Charlson (Grove); Betsy, Caroline and Erick Charlson (Hagen); Julia Knutson (Meltvedt); Lena Weltha; Ellen Thompson; Tobias Larson (Mathre); Randy Larson (Tungesvig); Lizzie Braland; Oliver and Andrew Anderson (Leite); Jane and John Ludvig (Sorn); Jacob Wilson; Mattie and Stone Mortvedt; Hans C. Gydeson.

1871: Lonnie Johnson (Glosemot); Malinda Knutson (Aabe); George L. Thompson; Betsy Wilson; George Johnson.

1872: Ole Knutson (Garvig); Berge Ponsnes; Michas Henderson (Østebø); Henry and Nels Henderson (Øiro); Harry and Nellie Larson; Bertha Larson (Tjernagel); Canute Canuteson (Aabe); Ole

J. Sandness; Eric Sheldall; John Halvorson-Mickelson.

1873: Annie Charlson (Hagen); Annas Henderson (Østebø); Henry Nelson (Rame); Nehemias Tjernagel; Thomas Johnson (Wooster); Martha Weltha; Jennie Wilson.

1874: Bertha Knutson (Meltvedt); Gudmond Rorem; Lars Ponsness.

1875: Hannah Weltha; Anna Knutson (Meltvedt); Belle Williams (Aga); Severin Holverson-Mickelson; O. T. V. Thompson (Ydmyr); Henry M. Tjernagel; Martha Larson (Mathre).

1876: Malinda Sheldall; Virginia Wier; Hannah Braland; Edward Braland; Zebulon and Gerhard Morrison.

1877: Lewis Sheldall; Andrew L. Henderson; George and Mary Christianson; Joseph Johnson (Wooster); Charles Knutson (Meltvedt); Joachim Espe.

1878: Lorenda Henderson; Annie and Jennie Christianson; Alex Henderson (Østebø); Annie Larson (Mathre); Hannah Charlson (Hagen); Martin Sheldall.

1879: Sarah G. Olson (Glosemot); Betsy Johnson (Wooster); Henry T. Anfinson; Minnie Nelson.

1880: Taurine Knutson (Meltvedt); Ole and Annie Peterson (Hetland); Isabelle Larson; An-



drew, Lizzie, Anna and George Anderson; Martha Olson (Espevaer); Sivert Opstvedt; Julia Larson (Mathre); Albert Henderson.

1881: Matilda Christianson; Ole Nelson; Mary Charleston; Anna Henderson (Østebø); Nettie and Franklin Maakestad.

1882: Theodore Knutson (Meltvedt); Helen and Bessie Shaw; Andreas Rasmussen (Lodden); E. Johnson; Christ Adolph Sakariasson (Molstre).

1883: Hans Johnson (Hovland); John Sandness; Malinda Larson (Mathre); Martin O. Tjernagel; Lewis Charleston (Sande); Martin Sevdal; Hans and Knut Larson (Lier); Aggie Frette.

1884: Ellen Braland; Ole J. Henderson (Østebø); Henry Anfinson; Andrena Larson (Mathre); Annie Sandness; Annie Henderson; Thomas and Alex Rasmussen (Vaula); Henry Henderson.

1885: Jennie and Minnie Hanson; Bertha Johnson (Hetland).

Quite a large number of the old pupils have taken courses at higher institutions of learning; some have entered the learned professions, others have gone into business, but the majority have remained on farms in the vicinity or taken up farming elsewhere. An overwhelming majority of the girls have chosen the most useful as well as noble of

professions, namely that of becoming good housewives and mothers. It might be of interest to mention that sixteen of the pupils became public school teachers.

The old teachers were, taken as a whole, a serious-minded body of men and women, and have left as a heritage to their scholars a stamp of character which has helped make them, scarcely without exception, a useful, upright body of citizens.

The teachers, as a rule, were good disciplinarians and where order and system prevail half the battle is won, and to impart as well as receive instruction becomes a pleasurable affair.

To willing workers there was opportunity for advancement then as now. The courses of study were, perhaps, not so full or as well planned as they came to be later, but with diligent application under intelligent guidance there was nothing to hinder the pupils from making good progress.

In my opportunities for observing life I have scarcely noted a greater contrasting of human emotions than were expressed in the sobs and tears, the yells of glee, the howls of pain, the hard-fought games, the funny antics, the sallies of wit, and in the laughter and very joyousness of living displayed in and about the old Sheldall School house.

Sometimes Old Adam would bob up in spite of



all vigilance, when the switch would occasionally have to be plied. On occasion the offender would be required to go forth, cut down, trim and prepare his own rod of punishment. This in itself was enough to humble most anybody. Sometimes a mischief-making "future president" would be escorted over to the girls' seats and made to sit between two of them, to his utter distress and mortification. At other times there would be wrong doers confined at recess and the miserable culprits would sit prisoners, sad in soul and spirit, and listen to the jubilee outside where all was freedom and happiness. Often the truant would be stood on his feet in front of the whole school till his legs ached, an abject example of the wages of wrong-doing.

We used to play Anti-over, Blackman, Drop-the-handkerchief, Needle's-eye, Norwegian ball, yes, even Sock-ball. In Blackman, Needle's-eye and Drop-the-handkerchief the girls joined, but Sock-ball, which simply consisted in throwing the ball as hard as possible where it might hurt the most, was taken part in only by the bigger boys. It was a foolish, cruel sport. A few of the boys happened to be hit killing blows in the abdomen, and each had much ado in regaining his breath, let alone recovering from the pain which would linger on for days. Fortunately for the school this rough sport

was abandoned. Once there was an orgy of coughing and spitting, which kept the whole school in an uproar while it lasted. Everyone seemed to have a cold come on at once and all vied, the one with the other, to do it now and be rid of it. This was during school hours, and the teacher being very wise decided that such an epidemic needed drastic treatment and kept us at our books during recess. This cured us. But there was a pinching mania that spread through the whole school, which persisted for a considerable time. One would steal behind another and pinch his or her arm with might and main. Though the pain was maddening, few would let on, but craftily watched their chance to get even. Our arms were black and blue for weeks and weeks afterwards. It was all done so cleverly that the teacher was only able to note the result, not the cause. Sometimes we would walk on stilts, but only a few proved to be expert at it. One of the older boys was long and lanky and athletic to a degree, and when with his enormous stilts he swung alongside the school house, shook hands with the chimney and sat by the belfray to eat his dinner, we thought he was the greatest acrobat ever. He would rise and crow gleefully like a self-confident rooster when he had finished his meal, then stride majestically forward. But on one occasion he was too cock-sure



in his movements, causing him to break one of his stilts. The mishap flung him forward thrice the length of his body before he was properly flattened out on the ground.

The glorious old game of Norwegian ball remained ever the chief amusement as far as the boys were concerned. None of us will forget the master hits of a muscular new-comer pupil, when with his hickory bat he sent the ball soaring to meet the sun, thus enabling him to make the home-run and with time to spare before the tantalizing ball would reach the hands itching to catch it and put him out. One of the boys wielded his batting-stick so that the ball would fly over his head and rearward, where nobody thought it necessary to be on guard to meet it. Another batter's terrific drives sent the ball hurtling straight ahead cannon-like, and woe to him who got in its way. The skillful hitter made the home base in leisurely fashion, smiling all the while as the outfielders hunted frantically for the ball last seen bobbing up and down far beyond the schoolyard in the Sheldall meadow. To see one's side lose a game just because some awkward performer didn't ply his legs in proper order when about to touch the base, and then to hear his despairing yell as the ball unmercifully bored into his flesh and put him out, was trying, to say the least.

Sometimes the teachers would join in the games, and often they acted as umpires. The better the games, the better the spirit throughout, and as long as such amusements were not overstressed they were really beneficial to the school work in general.

There was much sociability among the people in the early days, and this spirit communicated itself to the children at school; they loved to go a'visit-ing. Sometimes the school would tramp in a body to a neighboring school just for a friendly call, or to be present at some program. The pupils would have a royal time getting acquainted, and in combining in one grand aggregation during a game. Some of the boys rather new to each other reminded one of strange dogs accidentally thrown together, that sniff and smell around, hair bristling and all that, but finally make up and nearly run their legs off in their eager show of friendliness. When such visits were made during winter we would pile into bob-sleighs and send through startled neighborhoods to the accompaniment of bells and a general vocal hullabaloo. In going to spelling matches in the evenings we would generally fill up Henry L. Henderson's big sleigh drawn by his two powerful mules, and off we were with a flourish, the champion speller and owner of the outfit at the reins, and his henchmen huddled in a heap behind. The ex-



hilaration of the ride and the excitement of the contest helped rouse us to action and initiative. Rarely, if ever, did these spelling-matches or debates deteriorate into anything objectionable. The teachers as well as many of the patrons attended; and the great majority of the pupils themselves had no desire for other than good instruction provided together with opportunities for wholesome recreation.

On one occasion our school had a visitor who had been our teacher's companion on mutual trips of adventure in the wilds of the Dakotas. They spent the afternoon in reminiscent talk, and the children were allowed their freedom to listen or play as they chose. Being thus fired with stories of frontier life, of Indian encounters and other adventure, the boys got busy; for they must needs make a feint in imitating the narrators' deeds, and forthwith followed a fever for making war-like weapons, especially bows and arrows. The bows were of a widely different pattern and make, but had sufficient elasticity to speed the arrows so that they were dangerous enough, especially for the eyes and ears. An arrow sent at random past the corner of the school house hit an oncoming "redskin" in the temple just as he was rounding that same corner and was congratulating himself upon having escaped a missile in the rear. He promptly fell to the ground stunned

out of his wits, but got up after awhile with a fist-like swelling northeast of his left eye. It may have been the same fellow who, later, with wide open mouth was challenging his opponents in a snowball match and received a perfect hit between extended jaws, gagging him, thus halting further expression on the subject.

Though there were no bullies or "rough necks" in our school, human nature expressed itself here as elsewhere, and "boys be boys" as the newcomer said; therefore, when a passing spark happened to touch tinder, there would be a sudden rampus, unexpected as a bolt from heaven, subsiding, however, almost as quickly as it had come. The teacher, as a rule, kept an eye out for such performances and, of course, forbade them. Nevertheless, the belligerents would forget and get into trouble again and again and then, oh my! how the chips would fly. The girls were all regular ladies, of course, but they certainly could scratch.

Occasionally the teachers would delight the children by taking them to the woods for a holiday. The school house being situated so near the timber gave fine opportunity for hikes along the "Chicago," the Indian name for our beloved stream, which term having been translated into English resolved itself into plain "Skunk." Once we took a half-



holiday to visit an Indian camp near its banks. There must have been fully a hundred Indians, men, women and children, in the band. We watched them make camp, watched them as they roasted their skunk-sirloin over the fire, saw them feed their little ones and put them to sleep papoose-fashion, heard the song of the cry-baby and wondered why he used the same refrain as our babies do, and so on. We looked till we were tired. The Indians did not mind us any, but went quietly on with their business of doing little or nothing. They really preferred to remain unnoticed, nor did they appear to be the least bit curious about us, yet seeing everything that was going on without seeming to see.

Thus did our teachers instill in us an added interest in our fellow-beings, in nature, and in those things surrounding us that would be apt to broaden our minds. Then as now it was of great benefit to the children to learn to realize that the art of useful living is of the highest importance and that our studies, exercises and games should be directed toward this end.

After the regular terms of the public school year were over—these lasted six months usually—there would be a term of parochial school.

Many of the old-timers will remember Halvor Larson (Mathre), how unselfishly he offered himself in this unremunerative work, and with what zeal he embraced the opportunity to bear testimony and guide the children in his earnest, loving way.

Lars Flokketvedt will be long remembered by many, for he taught parochial school for years and years in different places hereabouts. It took men with Christian faith and love sufficient to forget their own worldly interests to engage in such a poorly paid occupation. Such men, however, received greater reward than material success can give, for they brought the Scriptures, the principles of Christian living before the young, resulting in a power for good, the ultimate blessings of which no man can measure or compute.

The teachers Hovland, Augestad and Berver were men of earnestness and ability. Augestad was a veritable giant among his fellows and could have withstood Farmer Burns, I am sure; but he preferred to apply himself in the service of the Lord, to lead the little lambs, as he fondly called them, the children. Though they loved him, the lambs were sometimes little imps as the following will show. He used to tramp for miles from his rather distant prairie home to and from school every day. He was a new-comer and had a supply of enormous



Woolen stockings of unusual length that had to exchange office twice or thrice a day, the deep, dewy prairie grass he waded through necessitating such change. These mammoth hose were hung in the windows to dry. Can anyone blame his charges if the temptation to put pieces of coal or other choice tit-bits into them proved too strong to be resisted? Augestad, possessing a saving sense of humor, showed no resentment, but patted his property gently till the inquisitive bugs, and other accumulated content, dropped out. He did not frown on play, well knowing that innocent fun may well go hand in hand with seriousness; each in its place. He encouraged the children to look bright and pleasant, and not assume the hang-dog look when he talked about God and His attributes. Long live the memory of this honest, upright soul.

One of the chief advantages enjoyed by the pupils of the Sheldall School were the singing exercises held during school hours; also in the evenings, when all in the community might join. Most of the teachers loved music and encouraged the singing of good songs of uplifting sentiment. Patriotic songs were frequently heard. The "Song King" was one of the favorite song books of those days. Hans Dale of Story City would often lead the sing-

ing in the evenings. Being possessed of a fine tenor voice, a cheerful manner and sunny temperament, he always held the interest of his song pupils and no one grew tired of the lessons. The "Singing School" was always quite an informal affair, so that between singing there would be opportunities for small talk, or even hints at courting, if such a tremendously important matter happened to be on somebody's program. Most of the pupils were new to four-part singing. On one occasion Mr. Dale happened to tell in Norwegian a young fellow who had in him the promise of an opera star, that he was to sing tenor. The prospective "star" who was facing south promptly turned towards the north according to directions. Though a musical term, Tenor, freely rendered, may in the Norse designate a northerly direction as our friend construed it.

Father's accordion, Lars Henryson's melodion, Osmund Weltha's "Psalmodykon" and the Henderson boys' (Henry, Osear and Tom) mammoth bass drum formed the nearest approach to a symphony orchestra to be heard here in the early days. But when the Henderson-Tjernagel (second generation) orchestra and later, the Riverside Band, were organized we thought we had made a good stride forward. As the Riverside Band boys were nearly all



former members of the school and singing society, and as the building itself came into their possession and became their resort for musical doings, it may not be out of place here to give a brief resume of their activities.

The members of the band were: Jacob Weltha, Tobias Larson, Lewis Ingebrigtsen, Christen Christenson Tjernagel, Martin, Michas, Annas, Alex and Andrew Henderson, Peter, Nehemias and Henry Tjernagel; Lewis Peterson, Albert Henderson and Carl Nelson joined a short while after the band was organized.

The organization began its career in the spring of 1885. The instruments were ordered from Lyon & Healy, Chicago. When it was reported from the station at Randall that "Hodno æ komne" (the horns have come), there was excitement throughout the neighborhood, and the old school house soon resounded with an ear-splitting din. The clamor presently spread all over the community. Eventually it resolved itself into music. Practically unaided we taught ourselves to play so that in a few months we were able to furnish a program of beginner's music at a Fourth of July celebration held in a nearby timber-nook. We received a great deal of praise, much of which, I fear, was unmerited. It encouraged us, however. When after some time Herman

Hagen, a musical Norwegian new-comer joined us, we were fairly well under way. He had played in a military band in the old country and was a good cornetist. He became very popular with the boys and helped us make progress.

We engaged as a teacher Prof. Anton Pederson of Jewell, Iowa, who was a professional musician and had, before coming to the United States, played in military bands in Oslo, in orchestras at Stockholm, and in concerts. He was an exceptionally fine flutist, as well as a very able performer on the clarinet, piccolo and violin. Eventually he moved to Chicago and soon took rank among the foremost musicians there, being engaged as flute soloist in the Thomas Symphony orchestra.

Under Pederson's leadership the band soon became one of the best in the county, and eventually it assumed place among the best bands in the state. Our reputation, as such, became pretty well established through our successful participation in the Storm Lake band tournament in 1887. One year the band appeared at Des Moines during the time of the State Fair. Also, at this time of its existence the organization made several concert trips and succeeded in giving a number of successful performances. It had been quite a struggle to raise money to buy instruments, and our expenses on



these ventures generally exceeded the profits, but nothing daunted, we worked away with unabated enthusiasm. Our object was not coin, primarily, but musical pastime and inspiration for ourselves, as well as entertainment and uplift in the community where we lived.

We band boys had a knack of enjoying ourselves with a fervor seldom equalled. Typical of the times there was scarcely a cent of money in evidence among us, in fact we didn't have to spend any to have a good time; for, didn't the trombonist cut capers to rival any circus clown, and didn't the tuba and 2nd cornet perform the most amazing pranks and stunts ever devised by human thinking-apparatus? We had the winding Skunk to bathe or fish in, or to skate on as the seasons varied; watermelon patches to appraise, serenades to perform, school, books, society, home, to enjoy and the beloved band on top of it all. Those were halcyon days. Our amusements were clean and wholesome, which accounts in large measure for the fact that we were never in a blase, jaded condition, but always in trim for more music, more work, more fun. There was no carousing in dances or where liquor flowed, scarcely any smoking or chewing; no swearing, no jazzing, no speeding; nor did the menace of ill-chosen films exist, and hardly an ice-cream par-

lor. Not that evil did not lurk in the corners then as always, but thanks to the guardian angels of our youth, our parents and bringing up, I may say that we escaped its clutches remarkably well.

Though the old Riverside Band finally rested on its laurels, the idea was taken up and continued by others, and at times the newer aggregations threatened to outdo the original body; however, no one grew jealous, for the parent organization looked on with easy complacency at the success of its offspring. Not only was the pioneer band a benefit to its own members, but to succeeding local organizations, also offshoots extending to towns, schools and colleges, to Decorah, St. Olaf, Jewell, I. S.C. and other places.

A noted Norwegian-American musician, upon hearing that a certain music-loving young pastor had accepted a call to Story City exclaimed: "Then you are indeed fortunate, for you are about to locate in the midst of a music-center." True enough, for have we not choirs, vocalists and musical performers galore in all the towns and rural districts hereabouts? We may be pardoned I hope for giving a little credit for the development of such a desirable condition to the musical pioneer-work of the Riverside Band and orchestra. The men's quartet, consisting of Hans and Lars Dale, Anfin Brandvig



# SOME SONGS OF LONG AGO

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## COME AGAIN WITH SINGING

Come, oh! come again with singing,  
Sweet and joyous music bringing;  
Happy are we all, Happy are we all,  
Happy are we all tonight;

### CHORUS:

Yes, we come again with singing,  
Happy, happy voices ringing,  
Happy are we all, Happy are we all,  
Happy are we all tonight.  
Tra, la, la, la; tra, la, la, la:

Stars are shining brightly o'er us,  
Sparkling eyes are bright before us,  
Happy are we all, Happy are we all,  
Happy are we all tonight.

### CHORUS

Happy youthful hearts are meeting,  
Cheerful are our songs of greeting;  
Happy are we all, Happy are we all,  
Happy are we all tonight.

### CHORUS



## SERENADE

This night we hold our revelry,  
The moon shines o'er the glassy sea;  
So now, in martial pride you see  
Our sports of chivalry;  
Securely locked in sleep's entrance,  
No mortal sees our midnight dance;  
Then haste! haste to yonder bower!  
We'll hail the happy hour.

Fa, la, la, la, li-ty, O!  
Fa, la, la, la, li-ty, O!  
Fa, la, la, la, li-ty, O!  
Fa, la, li-ty, O!

The myrtle and the cypress vine,  
The passion flower, the sweet woodbine,  
To form a wreath they all combine,  
To deck the fairy bower;  
For Æbe'ron is our fairy King,  
His birthright rules the mystic ring;  
Then join, join the festive scene,  
We'll hail the happy hour.

CHORUS



Throughout the forest aisles,  
And faces shaded long with care,  
Today shall light with smiles.  
Life's long and toilsome road will have enough of  
pain;  
Then let us from each moment some pleasure seek  
to gain;  
Then listen to the song all nature sings today,  
Come hasten to the woodland, Away, away, away!

#### CHORUS

## PROGRAM OF FIRST COMMEMORATIVE GATHERING IN HENDERSON GROVE

WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 4, 1929

Assemble at the Henderson Grove at 10 a.m.

Call to Order and Remarks, M. L. Henderson, Pres-  
ident of Sheldahl School House Association

Roll Call of Old Teachers, Lewis J. Tjernagel

Roll Call of Old Pupils, R. G. Pierce

Song by the Old Pupils

Historic Resume, read by Rev. H. M. Tjernagel

Music by Old Band Boys

Picnic Dinner

Impromptu Five Minute Greetings from "Old  
Timers" and Visitors, interspersed with Mel-  
odies of the Long Ago

Pilgrimage of the Old School House.